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**Meyer, Hugo Richard.** *The British State Telegraphs.* Pp. xvii, 408. Price, \$1.50. New York: Macmillan Company, 1907.

The present volume is one of a series of five by the author, devoted to a discussion of municipal and national experiments in the field of industry. The book is divided into two distinct parts, Chapters II to VI outline the inception and history of the movement which culminated in the purchase of the telegraph lines by the British Government in 1870, and Chapters VI to XXIII give an account of their management with especial emphasis upon "the problem of a large body of civil servants in a Democracy."

The author frankly admits that he is actuated by a motive in presenting this work, viz.: to warn the American public against the present tendency to expand the functions of government. In order to substantiate this view a dark portrayal of the political and class influences exerted by the presence of a large body of public servants affords the main evidence.

It is shown that by the enfranchisement of the civil servants, in 1868, the basis of this political influence was laid, which was zealously employed in later years to advance wages and to secure other favors. The author insists that incapacity, mismanagement and political intrigue have characterized the service. Civil service unions have arisen for the purpose of concentrating and making effective this large vote which has been used for selfish ends and not for the promotion of public policies. A book with a plea so special suggests a biased view, and although many facts have been marshalled in support of the main contentions, still a doubt is raised as to whether all the truth has been presented. Too much emphasis may have been placed upon rates as a test of the success of the British venture. It is highly probable that if the evidence had been given its proper weight the dark picture here presented might prove less sombre.

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*Municipal and Private Operation of Public Utilities: Report of the National Civic Federation Commission on Public Ownership and Operation.*

Three volumes: Part I, Volume I, General Conclusions and Reports; Part II, Volume I, Reports of Experts—United States; Part II, Volume II, Reports of Experts—United Kingdom. Pp. xxxii, 2447. New York: National Civic Federation, 1907.

This large and valuable collection of reports on public utilities by various experts is a unique contribution to the literature on municipal government. Its purpose is declared to be "to determine impartially and scientifically the relative merits of private and public ownership and operation of public utilities." There has never before been so serious an attempt in the United States to collect systematically the material necessary for such a judgment. The success of the investigation presented is determined by the manner in which it was carried on. Every effort was made to keep a judicial attitude, and to avoid special pleading. Nevertheless, the evidence, or rather the